

Mirror Mirror on the Wall, Please Show MY Body Without the Flaws

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Thesis Advisor
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Mitchell", is positioned below the printed name of the thesis advisor.

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Abstract

There are a significant amount of girls and women that face body image and self-esteem issues on a daily basis in the United States. "Mirror Mirror on the Wall, Please Show MY Body Without the Flaws," is a website that was created to help girls and women understand the issues involved with this topic. I present information and facts to show the severity of these concerns. I present the problem and offer suggestions on ways to overcome the problems so many women face. I hope that when viewing my website, women understand that this is a problem that they can overcome. I also presented the information to a group of girls at the high school level, as well as to a group of girls and women ranging in age from seven to mothers of all ages. Overall, I developed a website and did presentations, including activities and discussions, for girls and women to help empower them.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr. James Mitchell for advising me through this project. His help during this long and difficult task is very much appreciated.

I would like to thank Dr. Barb Stedman for her assistance in helping me develop an idea to complete my project.

I would also like to thank my mother, Paulette Vernon, for allowing me to use pictures that she has taken for the website.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the young girls and women out there who are taking a stand on this issue, helping increase women's self-esteem, and encouraging women to embrace their own beauty.

Author's Statement

The Project

“Mirror Mirror on the Wall, Please Show MY Body Without the Flaws,” was created in an effort to express to young girls and women information about body image issues that many face and to help increase self-esteem and help them to embrace their own personal beauty.

For this creative project, I designed a website to help achieve the intended purpose noted above. The website provides information in various formats to help explain how significant the issues of women's body image and self-esteem truly are to the women in today's society. The website contains ten different tabs: home, info, quiz, quotes, healthy tips, fast facts, video clips, get help, about me, and works cited. I chose the sections listed above because they offer information in different layouts so that viewers can learn about the topic in whichever format works best for them. Some people like to read articles, some prefer videos, and others prefer reading statistics and facts.

The home tab has the title of the project and notifies viewers that the website is about women's body image. The info tab contains a write-up with information about the issue of the media and the effects on women's body image and self-esteem. It includes statistics about how many women are affected, and facts about eating disorders as well. It concludes with steps women should take to help overcome these issues. The quiz section has a ten question quiz that tells the status of the reader's body image and self-esteem. There are three categories that the quiz taker could be classified into based on the answers selected from the quiz. Each of the sections informs the reader of the current status of her self-esteem and tips on what she can do to improve her body image. The quotes tab contains quotes from different famous people about beauty and embracing our own loveliness and being happy with oneself. The healthy tips section

provides twelve suggestions on actions people can take to improve their self-esteem and feel better about their body image. It also has a section of healthy actions that people should and should not do.

The fast facts provide eleven facts and/or statistics about women's body image, the average size of models compared to the size of the average woman in the United States, and how many girls and women in the United States are dissatisfied with their bodies. The video clips area has links to five different videos on YouTube. The videos are about women's body image and self-esteem. Many of these videos are public service announcements presented by the Dove Self-Esteem Fund. Dove has created these videos in an effort to establish a world where real beauty is a source of confidence. They also have a campaign for real beauty. Dove is a great source to help women with their body images and self-esteem. The get help tab provides resources for help. There are three lists that have places to contact in Muncie, Indiana, Indianapolis, Indiana, and websites with information on various topics that are related to body image and eating disorders. The about me segment provides a short description about myself, and why I chose to create a website about women's body image. The final part displays the sources where I found all of my information.

The Process

The process in creating the website was carried out piece by piece. I created a timeline that had a breakdown of which sections of the website I would have to complete each week. The home tab was constructed first by putting the title on there. I later came back and added pictures and a quote I created. I completed the quiz tab next by looking at different quizzes that were similar and about the same topic. I then wrote my own questions, answers, and summaries. The fast facts and quotes areas were the next two sections that I worked on. The fast facts information

was constructed by finding many facts from various websites and then choosing the ones that I thought were most beneficial to readers. The quotes section was constructed in the same manner.

The healthy tips and get help tabs were put together next. I searched the Internet for healthy tips in regards to women's body image and self-esteem and listed the ones that seemed most helpful and possible for the average woman to act upon. I also searched places and clinics in Muncie, Indiana and Indianapolis, Indiana, as well as websites that specialize or provide help with body image and self-esteem issues for resources for help. The video clips were chosen by viewing different YouTube videos on the topic and selecting the ones that I believed would have the most impact on viewers. The five videos chosen display very good messages and are created in a way that it affects the observer in a strong manner deep inside. Following the videos was the about me section. I simply wrote a short summary about why I chose to create the website and the topic of women's body image and information about my graduation date and how to contact me. The information section was constructed by researching statistics about body image issues and eating disorders. I then completed a write-up about the topic and included steps that women should take to improve their self-esteem and body image. Finally, the works cited tab was created by simply putting the resources I used on the website.

The pictures that were used on the website were all taken by my mother. I chose pictures from her gallery, because I was given complete permission to use them and would not infringe upon any copyright laws. The two photos that were used on the home page were selected because they show different sizes and types of women's bodies, and the faces the girls are making in the pictures were a perfect fit, in my opinion, with the title of the project. The picture on the info segment was chosen because it has a number of girls that are all different and unique individuals from different schools and places. I also added a statistic under the picture that says,

“At least 18 of these girls are unhappy with their bodies, according to statistics.” There are twenty-three girls in the picture and statistics show that eighty percent of girls are not satisfied with their reflection. I thought the picture along with the statistic was a good representation of average United States girls and the large number that are affected by body image issues. The picture on the quiz tab was selected because it displays a girl exercising by participating in cheerleading, and exercising is one healthy suggestion on what all people should do when trying to achieve a healthy body type. Also, the quote on the picture is about feeling like a star. I believe all girls and women should feel like stars in their own bodies and skin. The picture is self-empowering, in my opinion. The pictures on the fast facts section were selected because they show a group of girls having fun and acting silly expressing their happiness. They are all different individuals with unique bodies, but came together and had a good time without having to worry about how they looked or how others thought they looked. The picture on the videos tab shows girls and women ranging in age from fifteen to sixty-six to portray that women of all ages are affected by body image and self-esteem issues. Finally, the picture on the about me section is a picture of myself to help viewers get an understanding of the person behind the scenes that created the website.

The Design

The creative component of developing the website itself has been briefly touched upon above. The manner in which the information was constructed and the pictures that were selected were previously mentioned. I selected a purple overall background with a black inner background with purple and white font. I chose this color scheme because I thought it would be attractive to girls and women, while having a sharp finished look as well. I placed the pictures and typed information in different places in each section to give a different appeal to each page. I

wanted to keep the reader interested. I also selected the paragraph text box that had a scroll bar with a circle instead of a rectangle that is typically used. I wanted to use unique tools to make the website look different than a typical site. I also used different font types for the titles of each particular section. In addition, I added unique banners to some of the pages to emphasize the messages the pictures were trying to portray. Overall, every detail including the colors, the page layout, the pictures, and the font type were all selected in accordance with what would make the page look interesting, appealing to the target audience of women, informative, and accurately displaying the intended messages.

The Presentation

I presented the information from my research and website to a group of girls at the high school level, as well as to a group of girls and women ranging in age from seven to mothers of all ages. During the presentations, I informed the girls and women about the existence of the website so that they can view it at their convenience. I also presented information to them including the statistics from the fast facts and info sections. I informed them of places they can contact for help and suggested healthy tips that would help them improve their self-esteem and body image. In addition to informing them about the topic and providing them with helpful resources, I also conducted some activities that I thought would be fun for them. We played music and danced to promote fun, happiness, exercise, and to show them one activity they could do at home or with friends anywhere to make them feel good about themselves. We also had a conversation about women in their lives whom they admire and the qualities they possess that make them beautiful inside and out. Overall, I think the events were very informative, fun, exciting, enlightening, and successful. I think everyone involved took something away from the experience.

The Purpose

“Mirror Mirror on the Wall, Please Show MY Body Without the Flaws,” is a project that was created to help girls and women understand the issues involved with body image and self-esteem problems that many face. I wanted to present information and facts to show the significance of these concerns and the large amount of girls and women that are affected by this topic everyday of their lives. Before a change can be made in the right direction, people need to understand the severity of the problem. Therefore, I presented the problem and then offered suggestions on ways to overcome the issue so many women face. I hope that when viewing my website, women understand that this is a problem that they can overcome. I hope they feel enlightened and empowered to embrace their own personal beauty. Each woman is a unique individual and should have the opportunity to feel beautiful inside and out. I aspire for women to come together and work to overcome the body image and self-esteem issues, because every girl and woman deserves to feel good about herself.

Throughout this process, I have learned the severity of the consequences that many women face when they have negative body images and a low self-esteem. I had previous knowledge that there were significant issues involved with women and their bodies. However, after completing this project, I have been enlightened to the considerable amount of girls and women who have eating disorders, who are not happy with their reflection, and various other effects. After researching the topic, my motivation to create the website increased. The personal reason I wanted to do this project is because I felt that I was in a position to express my voice to help other women. I have been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to expand my knowledge by going to college. I believe this project was my chance to wrap up my college experience with lending a helping hand and reaching out to the community to help women who

may not have exposure to information on a topic about their own bodies and beauty. I am a strong supporter of empowering women and increasing their confidence and self-esteem.

Therefore, I created a website and presented the information to girls and women of all ages in the community to help them better understand the possible consequences and steps they can take to feel better about themselves and become healthier. Overall, I think this project has helped me become a more enlightened person, and I am very thankful I had the opportunity to use my voice to help lead girls and women in the right direction.

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Appendix A

The following pages are snapshots from the website of each of the ten different tabs. The web address is <http://www.wix.com/ameliavernon/womensbodyimage>.



Women's Body Image

following good about
hottself is what every
girl deserves

Mirror Mirror on the Wall

Please Show My Body

Without the Flaws



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INFORMATION

Women are becoming increasingly interested in their body images compared to the ideal body images that are portrayed in the media such as TV programs, magazines, Internet, and advertising in general. The average United States resident is exposed to approximately 5,000 advertising messages on a daily basis ("The Media, Body Image and Eating Disorders"). The ideal image that is repeatedly displayed is a woman that is 5'1" and weighs 117 pounds. This is the average size of models in today's society in the United States. However, the average woman is 5'4" with a weight of 140 pounds ("Wellness - Body Image - Shocking Statistics"). These significant discrepancies create low self-esteem and body image issues amongst many women. The more women are exposed to these unrealistic images, the more dissatisfied with their own bodies they become. Currently, 8 out of 10 women are not happy with their reflection ("Weighing The Facts: Body Image Statistics"). This is a very large percentage of women that are characterized as finding flaws in their reflections. It is sad and disturbing to strongly consider the thought of 80 percent of the women in society having self-esteem issues and not being able to wake up on a daily basis, look in the mirror, smile, and embrace their own beauty.

30 percent of women choose an ideal body shape that is 20 percent underweight and an additional 44 percent chose an ideal body shape that is 10 percent underweight ("Wellness - Body Image - Shocking Statistics"). Because women are striving for ideal body shapes that are considerably underweight, this leads to negative self-perceptions and eating disorders. The age at which women are most often affected by eating disorders is during adolescence and early



at least 18 of these girls are unhappy with their bodies, according to statistics

you never know the true feelings behind a smiling face

This website was created using wix.com GoBuild your own website

Women's bodies are constantly being judged and scrutinized in our society. This leads to many women having self-esteem issues, which is not healthy. As women, we need to embrace our own beauty and find happiness within ourselves! Take this quiz to find out the status of your body image.

BODY IMAGE QUIZ

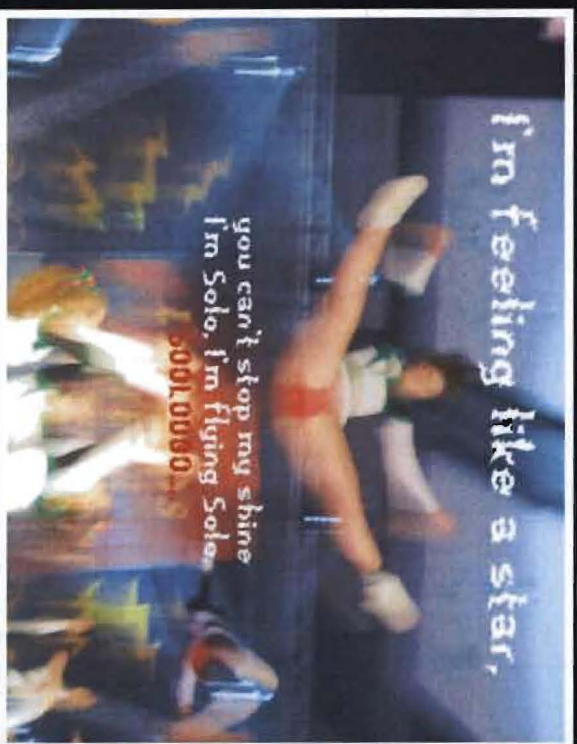
1. What are your feelings about how your body looks?
- a. You are satisfied with your body most of the time.
 - b. You do not like some parts.
 - c. You are dissatisfied with most of your body.

2. If you had a list of all of the things that you want to change about your body, how long would it be?
- a. There would be one or two things, but for the most part, you like your body.
 - b. Maybe 5-10 items.
 - c. The list would be very long, because you wish most of your body were very different.

3. What do you think is the ideal body image for women?
- a. Women's bodies come in all shapes and sizes.
 - b. A healthy woman should have some fat on her hips and thighs.
 - c. Women should be thin and leggy.

4. If you exercise, why is it important to you?
- a. You want to keep your body healthy and strong.
 - b. You want to lose weight.
 - c. You want to have the perfect body.

5. How often do you talk about weight with your friends?
- a. Rarely, when someone loses or gains a lot of weight.



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Beauty is not in the face; beauty is a light in the heart.

-- Kahlil Gibran (Rudd).

Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it.
-- Confucius (Rudd).

Taking joy in living is a woman's best cosmetic.

-- Rosalind Russell (Rudd).

BEAUTY DOES NOT DEPEND ON WHAT'S OUTSIDE YOUR MIND.
YOU DON'T WANT A LITTLE-OR-LARGE HAIR CUT ON A JUDY-GENTLEMAN.
-- GAYLORD KIRCHER (Rudd).

Beauty in things lies in the mind which contemplates them.

-- David Hume (Rudd).

They will often tell me they can't love themselves because they are so fat, or as one girl put it, 'too round at the edges.' I explain that they are fat because they don't love themselves. When we begin to love and approve of ourselves, it's amazing how weight just disappears from our bodies.

-- Louise Hay ("Motivational Inspirational Weight Loss Quotes, Sayings, lose weight quotations, obesity").

There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.

-- Francis Bacon (Rudd).

I think that whatever size or shape body you have, it's important to embrace it and get down! The female body is something that's so beautiful. I wish women would be proud of their bodies and not dis other women for being proud of theirs!

-- Christina Aguilera ("Famous Body Image Quotes").

Someone's opinion of you does not have to become your reality.

-- Les Brown ("Body Image Quotes - Finest Quotes")

Getting my lifelong weight struggle under control has come from a process of treating myself as well as I treat others in every way.

-- Oprah Winfrey ("Motivational Inspirational Weight Loss Quotes, Sayings, lose weight quotations, obesity").

HEALTHY

TIPS

1. Focus on your strengths and positive qualities. To gain confidence in your appearance, notice what you love about your body! Building a healthy body image means focusing your strengths, not your weaknesses. (75 Tips for Building a Healthy Body Image)
2. Choose your friends wisely. If your friends or family comment on your flaws, consider limiting the amount of time you spend with them. To boost a bad body image includes looking out for your best interests. (5 Tips for Building a Healthy Body Image)
3. Get healthy. Move your body around, learn how hunger works, try new physical activities. Enjoy the confidence, movement and fresh air brings! Building a healthy body image and achieving your beauty goals is about being strong and active. (45 Tips for Building a Healthy Body Image)
4. Look at pictures of REAL women. We come in so many different shapes and sizes: tall, heavy, curvy, thin, blonde, black, various veined, smooth, bumpy, but we don't usually see each others bodies. We see the perfectly air-

HEALTHY DO

and DON'T

Do

- Accept that bodies come in a variety of shapes and sizes. This is what makes us interesting!
- Remember that you can be your worst critic. Others may find you really attractive.
- Expect normal weekly and monthly changes in weight and shape.
- Explore your internal self, emotionally and spiritually. Also look at yourself as a growing, changing human being.
- Explore all the things you have to offer others: recognize your positive qualities.
- Decide how you wish to spend your energy: pursuing the perfect image or enjoying the people and positive things in your life.
- Be aware of your own weight prejudice. Explore how those feelings may affect your self-esteem.

(75 Tips for Healthy Body Image) - M. K. K. K.

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Fast Facts

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happy

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1. 20% of women chose an ideal body shape that is 20% underweight and an additional 44% chose an ideal body shape that is 10% underweight ("Wellness - Body Image - Shocking Statistics")
2. The average U.S. woman is 5'4" and weighs 140 pounds, whereas the average U.S. model is 5'11" and weighs 117 pounds ("Wellness - Body Image - Shocking Statistics")

3. 8 out of 10 women are not happy with their reflection ("Weighing The Facts: Body Image Statistics")

4. 80% of children are afraid of being fat ("Weighing The Facts: Body Image Statistics")

5. More than 50% of 10-year old girls wish they were thinner ("Weighing The Facts: Body Image Statistics")

6. The average size of the ideal woman, as portrayed by models, has become progressively thinner over the years and has stabilized at around

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Videos

Here are links to some video clips about women's body image and self-esteem. Many of these videos are public service announcements presented by the Dove Self-Esteem Fund. Dove has created these videos in an effort to establish a world where real beauty is a source of confidence. They also have a campaign for real beauty. Dove is a great source to help women with their body images and self-esteem.



Building Confidence & Self-Esteem in Young Girls / PSA Video
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWz0VwCd1E>

Every Girl Is Beautiful / Self-Esteem PSA Video
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iENF-UUwV0&feature=related>

Dove Evolution
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYhCnOjI46U&feature=related>

The Psychology of Beauty - Media Affects Body Image
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnUQJFYdGcY&feature=related>

Tyra Banks and Body Image
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdvDqe4TbUc>

helping women of all ages

one step at a time

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Resources for Help

Muncie, IN

Lynns Counseling Clinic
4221 N Broadway Ave
Muncie, IN
(765) 282-7150

Whaley, Betsy Mdiv - Betsy
Whaley, Mdiv, Counseling &
Coaching
308 E Adams St
Muncie, IN
(765) 744-9738

Porter & Porter
425 N High St
Muncie, IN
(765) 747-0151

Behavioral Support Service LLC
405 S Main St
Muncie, IN

Indianapolis, IN

Mirweel Psychological Center Inc
3676 Washington Blvd, Indianapolis,
IN
(317) 923-3900

Cummins Behavioral Health Systems
Inc. Inc Office
2345 S Lynhurst Dr # 205
Indianapolis, IN
(317) 247-8900

Christian Theological Seminary
Counseling Center
1050 West 42nd Street, Indianapolis,
IN
(317) 924-5205

Adult & Child Mental Health
8320 Madison Avenue, Indianapolis,
IN

Websites

www.anad.org
The National Association of
Anorexia and Associated
Disorders website.

www.edap.org
The National Eating Disorders
Association website.

www.edreferral.com
Eating Disorder Referral and
Information Center.

www.bodypositive.com
Boosting body image at any
weight.

www.something-fishy.org
Website on eating disorders.

You may also contact your school counselors!

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Amelia Vernon



Amelia Vernon is the creator of the website and project "Mirror Mirror on the Wall, Please Show My Body Without the Flaws," about women's body image. She created this website for her Senior Honors Thesis/Project. She is very interested in the affects of the media on young women and their body image. She wanted to reach out to the community and help young girls recognize the negative impacts on their bodies when trying to attain an image that is not healthy nor realistic.

Vernon will graduate on May 7, 2011 from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Financial Analysis. You may contact her at avernon@bsu.edu with any questions regarding women's body image or places to contact for help.



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"Famous Body Image Quotes." Pop Monk Famous Quotes. N.p., n.d. Web. 14 Feb. 2011. <<http://www.popmonk.com/quotes/body.htm>>

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